

VEHICLE TOUCH INPUT DEVICE AND METHODS OF MAKING SAME

Abstract

The present invention provides a touch input device for use in a vehicle such as an automobile. The touch input device includes a capacitive touch sensor that is disposed underneath a surface of the vehicle's interior that is accessible and touchable by an occupant of the vehicle. The touch sensor is configured so that a touch to a designated area of the surface activates the touch sensor by capacitive coupling between the touch implement and the touch sensor through the surface. The signals generated can be used to control or otherwise interact with displays and other electronic systems in the vehicle. The touch sensor can be constructed using a wide variety of substrate materials, including paper, cloth, plastic, and the object forming the touch surface. The touch surface can be provided by an airbag cover, and the touch sensor can be constructed to safely blow apart upon airbag deployment. Methods of making a touch input device for use in a vehicle are also provided.

15